

led immediately to the employment of Raffaello and Pinturicchio, in conjunction, in the decoration of the celebrated Library at Sienna, and subsequently, to the cultivation of such studies on the part of the former as induced his composition of the inimitable arabesques of the Loggie of the Vatican, &c. &c.; and on that of the latter artist to the execution of the ceilings of the choir of Sta. Maria del Popolo, and those of the Apartamenti Borgia, &c. at Rome. Bacchiacca became so completely enamoured of the style, that his whole life was devoted to painting animals, flowers, &c. in "grotesque" decoration; and he ultimately became famous throughout Italy as a perfect master of that variety of design.

In freedom and cleverness of drawing, in harmony of colour, in brilliancy of touch, in nice balance of the "pieni" and "vuoti," and in close imitation of the paintings of the ancient Romans, this specimen is one of the most successful that has ever been executed, although, in delicacy of finish and refined study, it can scarcely be expected to equal the subsequent productions of Giovanni da Udine and Morto da Feltro.

During the stay of Raffaello in Rome, under the pontificate of Leo X., he was commissioned by that pontiff to decorate an arcade, which had been constructed during the reign of his predecessor, Julius II., by Bramante, whose daughter Raffaello married.

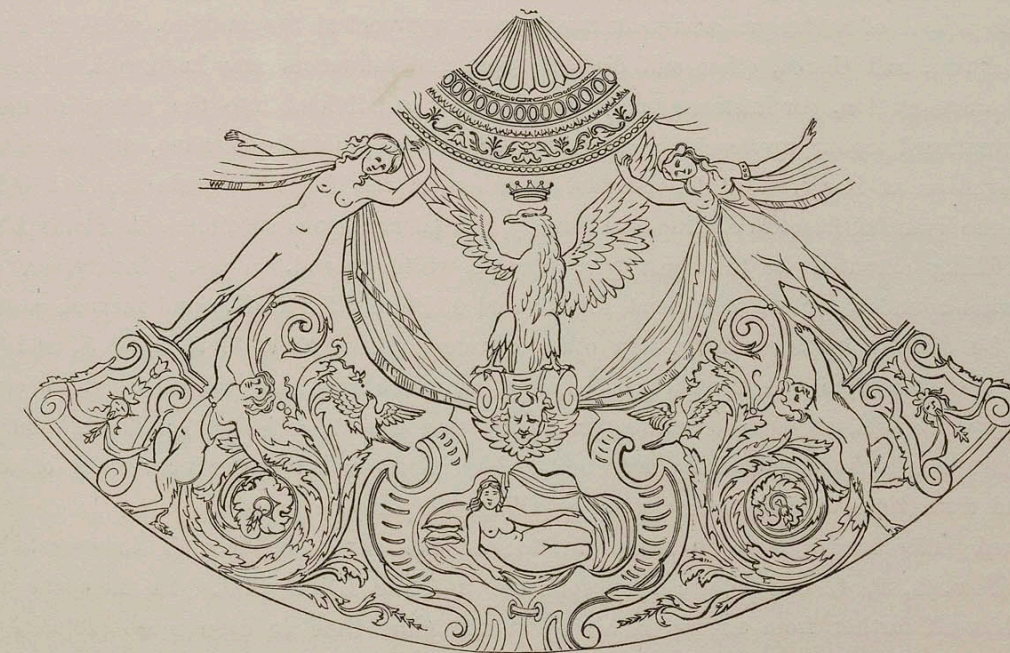
It was determined that while the theme of the necessary decorations should be sacred, their style and manner of execution should rival the finest remains of ancient painting which had been discovered at Rome up to that period. The general designs appear to have been made by Raffaello himself, and the details to have been carried out by a chosen band of assistants, who unquestionably entered with wonderful zeal into the realisation of the great work. It was by their hands, controlled by the exquisite taste of the great Urbinese, that those celebrated "loggie," which have ever since their execution been a theme of admiration for all artists, were created. We have given a careful selection, showing the principal ornamental motives comprised in them in Plate LXXXVI.

These arabesques cannot fairly be compared with the ancient, as the former were executed by the greatest masters of the age, and are applied to the decoration of an edifice of the highest magnificence and importance, whilst the latter were the productions of a less distinguished period of Art, and those now in existence ornament buildings of a class relatively far less important to Imperial magnificence than the Vatican was to Papal. The comparison might be fairer if we could but recall the faded glories of the Palace of the Cæsars, or the "Golden House" of Nero.

"The ancient arabesques have, in almost every instance, all their parts kept upon a reduced scale, in order to favour the apparent extent of the locality they decorate; in addition to which they generally manifest a predominating general proportion between their several parts. They never present such striking differences in scale between the principal subjects as we find in the arabesques of Raffaello, the component parts of which are sometimes as unreasonably large as they sometimes are unreasonably small. The greater is often placed beside and above the less, thereby emphasising the dissonances, and being the more offensive by a deficiency in symmetry, as well as in the very choice of the motives for decoration. Thus, close to the richest arabesques, presenting, on a very small scale, elegant and minute combinations of flowers, fruit, animals, human figures, and views of temples, landscapes, &c., we find calices of flowers putting forth twisted stalks, leaves, and blossoms—all which, with reference to the adjoining and first-described arabesques, are of colossal proportion; thereby not only injuring the accompanying decorations, but also destroying the grandeur of the whole architectural design. Lastly, on examining the choice of subjects with respect to the association of ideas indicated thereby, and the decorations in the symbols and allegories employed to convey them, we find that the works of the ancients, who reverted to no other source than their mythology, appear to great advantage, in point of unity of idea, when compared with the prevailing intermixture

in the Loggie of that imaginary world with the symbols of Christianity." Such are among the general conclusions to which that profound student of ancient polychromy, M. Hittorff, has arrived, and it is impossible not to concur in their propriety; while condemning, however, such faults of *ensemble*, we must not lose sight of the exquisite graces of detail wrought out in their execution by Raffaello and his scholars. "Proceeding from the Vatican to the Villa Madama, we find, immediately on entering its halls, that divisions create a less confusing general effect. In all the principal decorations there is a better regulated proportion, and greater symmetry; and in the magnificent roofs, notwithstanding the multiplicity of their ornaments, a more gratifying and calming influence is exerted upon us. Here, where all the principal subjects represent scenes from the mythology of the ancients, we find a pervading unity conceived more in the spirit of the ancients. If we adopt the general opinion, and look upon this beautiful work as a second undertaking conceived by Raffaello in the spirit of the Loggie, and executed entirely by Giulio Romano and Giovanni da Udine, we see how the favourite pupils of the incomparable master succeeded in avoiding faults against good taste, which he and his contemporaries cannot fail to have recognised in his former work, favourably as it was received by the popular voice, not only of courtiers, but of artists." Unlike the arabesques of the Vatican, which are executed, for the most part, upon white grounds, those of this delicious suburban retreat are, for the most part, worked out upon variously coloured grounds—a habit to which Giulio Romano appears to have been more partial than either Raffaello or Giovanni da Udine.

The villa itself was built by Romano and his fellow-labourer for Pope Clement VII. when Cardinal Giulio de Medici, the first designs having been given by Raffaello. The work was still incomplete when it was partially destroyed by Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, to revenge himself upon Clement VII. who had burnt fourteen of his castles in the Campagna of Rome. The villa is now rapidly going



Detail of a Portion of a Stucco Ceiling in the Palazzo, Mattei di Giove, Rome, by Carlo Maderno.

to decay; but the grandeur of the three arches still remaining is sufficient to show that the design was worthy of Raffaello; and that it was his is proved beyond a doubt, by a letter to Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino, written by Castiglione, as well as by some drawings, which, together with the letter, are still in existence.

The Villa Madama was purchased after the confiscation of the Medici property, in 1537, by